



**STATE OF ARIZONA**  
**DIVISION OF EMERGENCY**  
**MANAGEMENT**



**RECOVERY SECTION**

**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**

**PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

**SECTION 11**

**ALTERNATE & IMPROVED PROJECTS**

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**STATE OF ARIZONA  
DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT  
PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM  
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**



## **ALTERNATE & IMPROVED PROJECTS**

### **I. OVERVIEW**

Alternate and Improved Projects are options only available under a Major Disaster declared by the President. These are not options under a State/Governor's declaration of emergency.

### **II. ALTERNATE PROJECTS**

An applicant may determine that the public welfare would not be best served by restoring a damaged facility or its function to the pre-disaster design. In this event, the applicant may use the Public Assistance grant for that facility for other purposes. For example, if an applicant decides not to repair a damaged school, it may use the grant for repair of the school as an alternate project grant to make improvements to an undamaged office building, or to purchase new school buses. Funds also may be used on more than one alternate project but may not be used to pay the non-Federal share of any project nor for any operating expense.

An applicant may request of the State an alternate project in lieu of both small and large projects but only for permanent restoration projects (i.e., Category C, D, E, F, and G project work). Funds for debris removal and emergency protective measures (i.e., Category A and B project work) **cannot** be used for alternate projects. Alternate projects are eligible for 75% of the approved Federal share of the estimated eligible costs associated with repairing the damaged facility to its pre-disaster design or the actual costs of completing the alternate project, whichever is less. If soil instability at the alternate project site makes the repair, restoration, or replacement of a State or local government-owned or –controlled facility infeasible, the Federal funding for such an alternate project will be 90% of the Federal share of the approved Federal estimate of eligible costs. This exception does not apply to Private Nonprofit facilities.

Prior to the start of construction of any Alternate Project, the State (Grantee) shall submit for approval by the FEMA Regional Director (RD) the following:

- a) a description of the proposed alternate project
- b) a schedule of work
- c) the projected cost of the project(s)

The State shall also provide the necessary assurances to document compliance with special requirements including but not limited to floodplain management, environmental assessment, hazard mitigation, protection of wetlands, and insurance.

Upon approval by FEMA, a version to the original PW will be written to cover the "Scope of Work" for the Alternate Project at an allowable cost of 75% of the original PW estimate. This will allow the applicant to proceed with work on the alternate project.

During Final Inspection, all the documentation for the alternate project will be inspected and the actual cost determined. Reimbursement is limited to 75% of the original PW estimate.

### III. IMPROVED PROJECT

When performing restoration work on a damaged facility, an applicant may decide to use the opportunity to make improvements to the facility. For example, the applicant may decide to lay asphalt on a gravel road or replace a firehouse that had originally had two bays with one that has three bays. Projects that incorporate such improvements are called **Improved Projects**. An applicant may request an improved project for either a small or large project. The improved facility must have the same function and at least the equivalent capacity as that of the pre-disaster facility. Funding for such projects is capped at the estimated cost that would be associated with repairing or replacing the damaged facility to its pre-disaster design.

- 1) A Project Worksheet (PW) is written and approved to repair a facility, damaged in a disaster, to pre-disaster condition.
- 2) Applicant decides to improve or do more than just repair the eligible damage.
- 3) Applicant submits a letter (signed by the Applicant's Designated Agent) to the ADEM Public Assistance Program Manager requesting an Improved Project, providing a detailed explanation of the improved project and projected cost estimate.
- 4) ADEM will provide written response approving or denying the applicant's request.
- 5) If approved, the ADEM as Grantee provides notification to FEMA and submits a version to the originally approved project detailing the approved improved project. ADEM will request FEMA perform any applicable environmental/floodplain reviews of the project. (Any improved project that results in a significant change from the pre-disaster configuration (i.e., different location, footprint, function, or size) of the facility must be **approved by FEMA prior to construction** to ensure completion of the appropriate environmental or historic review. The State's approval for such a request would have to be held pending FEMA's review.)
- 6) FEMA will provide notification to the State once all reviews are complete and the version has been processed.

- 7) Once this process is complete the Applicant will be notified by the State and they can begin work on the project.
- 8) Reimbursement for the project is capped at the original repair estimated cost. During Final Inspection (FIR) of that Project Worksheet (PW) the State Inspector will check that the damaged facility was repaired as stated in the "Scope of Work" and will determine the actual cost of that portion of work.

Reference:

- a) Public Assistance Policy Digest, FEMA 321, page 8 and 71.
- b) Public Assistance Guide, FEMA 322/ June 2007, page 110 and 111.